

Encyclopedia of Cleanliness in Islam and Modern Science

Introduction:

Cleanliness (Taharah) is one of the most important principles in Islam. It covers physical, spiritual, and environmental purity. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: 'Cleanliness is half of faith.' (Sahih Muslim 223). This teaching shows that Islam connects cleanliness directly with faith and righteousness. Modern science also confirms that hygiene and cleanliness are essential for health, prevention of diseases, and overall well-being.

Cleanliness in the Qur'an:

The Qur'an emphasizes cleanliness in many verses. Allah says: 'Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.' (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:222). Another verse states: 'And your clothing purify.' (Surah Al-Muddaththir 74:4). These verses highlight that both physical and spiritual cleanliness are important parts of a believer's life.

The Concept of Taharah (Purity):

In Islam, Taharah refers to cleanliness from both physical impurities and spiritual sins. There are two main types: physical purity (clean body, clothes, and surroundings) and spiritual purity (clean heart and soul). Physical cleanliness is achieved through washing, bathing, and maintaining hygiene, while spiritual purity comes from repentance, good deeds, and remembrance of Allah.

Ablution (Wudu) and Its Benefits:

Performing Wudu (ablution) before prayers is a key practice in Islam. It involves washing the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms, head, and feet. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'When a Muslim performs Wudu and washes his face, every sin that he looked at leaves with the water.' (Muslim 244). Modern science confirms that regular washing removes bacteria, dust, and viruses, promoting cleanliness and health.

Ghusl (Full Body Purification):

Ghusl is a full-body purification performed after major impurities such as sexual relations or menstruation. It restores physical and spiritual cleanliness. Regular bathing improves blood circulation, refreshes the body, and prevents infections. Islam encourages bathing every Friday before Jumu'ah prayer, showing the religion's focus on hygiene and health.

Cleanliness of Hands and Body:

The Prophet ﷺ emphasized washing hands before and after eating. He said: 'The blessing in food lies in washing the hands before and after eating.' (Tirmidhi 1846). Modern hygiene research proves that handwashing prevents the spread of germs and diseases. Islam also recommends trimming nails, cleaning teeth, removing body hair, and using perfume — all practices that enhance personal hygiene.

Use of Miswak (Tooth-Cleaning Stick):

The Prophet ﷺ regularly used Miswak, a natural tooth-cleaning stick, saying: 'If it were not for my Ummah's hardship, I would have ordered them to use Miswak before every prayer.' (Bukhari 887). Modern science has found that Miswak contains natural fluoride and antibacterial agents that prevent tooth decay, strengthen gums, and improve oral hygiene.

Clean Clothes and Environment:

Islam teaches that wearing clean clothes and keeping the environment pure are signs of faith. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.' (Muslim 91). He encouraged maintaining cleanliness in homes, streets, and public places. Modern science agrees that clean surroundings prevent disease outbreaks and promote psychological well-being.

Cleanliness in Food and Drink:

Islam encourages eating clean, Halal, and pure (Tayyib) food. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Verily, Allah is pure and accepts only what is pure.' (Muslim 1015). Modern nutritionists confirm that consuming clean and hygienic food prevents contamination, food poisoning, and illness.

Spiritual Cleanliness:

True cleanliness in Islam also includes purifying the heart from envy, hatred, and hypocrisy. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'In the body, there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound — it is the heart.' (Bukhari 52). Just as the body needs physical purification, the heart requires spiritual cleansing through repentance, forgiveness, and good deeds.

Environmental Cleanliness:

Islam emphasizes taking care of the environment. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Removing harmful things from the path is an act of charity.' (Bukhari 2827). He forbade littering public places and polluting water sources. Modern science also stresses environmental cleanliness to maintain ecological balance and prevent health hazards.

Scientific Benefits of Islamic Cleanliness:

Modern medical science confirms that cleanliness prevents infectious diseases, strengthens the immune system, and improves mental health. Practices like regular washing, oral hygiene, and environmental care reduce bacteria and stress. Studies also show that spiritual cleanliness — such as prayer and meditation — enhances emotional well-being and inner peace.

Cleanliness and Mental Health:

Clean surroundings promote positive thinking, focus, and calmness. Islamic cleanliness routines like Wudu and daily prayers refresh the mind and body. Scientific

research supports this, showing that personal hygiene and cleanliness habits reduce anxiety and depression.

Summary:

Cleanliness in Islam is a complete lifestyle — physical, spiritual, and environmental. The teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize purity, hygiene, and order as part of faith. Modern science confirms that cleanliness is essential for health, happiness, and longevity. By following Islamic teachings of cleanliness, a person attains both worldly health and spiritual success, living a balanced and pure life.